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ABSTRACT

No greater challenge currently faces the schools than articulating what a literacy curriculum for sociocultural diversity might look like. And yet the literature on young school children's composing has dealt only peripherally with this issue. In this theoretical essay, it is argued that, even for young children, the composing of both oral and written texts (i.e., planning, responding, revising) is a distinctly sociocultural process that involves making decisions, conscious or otherwise, about how one figures into the social world at any one point in time. Drawing on data from an ethnographic project in an urban school, the essay allows young children's composing processes sociocultural depth and breadth by highlighting variation in the kind of oral and written language genres a child uses, in the kinds of discourse traditions a child draws upon, and in the kind of relationships a child author enacts with others. The essay concludes with a discussion of the implications of a sociocultural perspective on young children's composing for literacy teaching and learning. One table and one figure are included. (Contains 72 references.) (Author/SR)

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ABSTRACT

No greater challenge currently faces the schools than articulating what a literacy curriculum for sociocultural diversity might look like. And yet the literature on young school children's composing has dealt only peripherally with this issue. In this theoretical essay, the author argues that, even for young children, composing of both oral and written texts (i.e., planning, responding, revising) is a distinctly sociocultural process that involves making decisions, conscious or otherwise, about how one figures into the social world at any one point in time. Drawing on data from an ethnographic project in an urban school, she allows young children's composing processes sociocultural depth and breadth by highlighting variation in the kind of oral and written language genres a child uses, in the kinds of discourse traditions a child draws upon, and in the kind of relationships a child author enacts with others. The author concludes with a discussion of the implications of a sociocultural perspective on young children's composing for literacy teaching and learning.

Whistle for Willie, Lost Puppies, and Cartoon Dogs: The Sociocultural Dimensions of Young Children's Composing or Toward Unmelting Pedagogical Pots

Anne Haas Dyson
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Just this morning, Genevive read her urban, K/1 class Ezra Jack Keats's sweet, low-key book about a young child, Peter, his dog Willie, and Peter's wish that he could, as the title says, "whistle for Willie." Now the children are gathering on the rug to share their own dog stories after a morning of drawing and writing.

While all the children have written stories, as it were, they are strikingly varied, as are Genevive's children, who come from socioculturally distinct communities. Mollie's story about whistling for her dog, putting on her pjs, and going to bed gets polite attention; so does Lamar's about his "regular dog"—until someone notes that Lamar doesn't actually have a dog, at which point his piece becomes quite funny to everyone. Jameel's story about a rich dog in jail who buys his freedom gets a mixed reaction: some find it funny; others find it confusing; he, however, finds it hilarious.

In this unfolding scene, Genevive's children were not so different from the highly-educated adults described by the linguist A. L. Becker (1988, p. 24). During a lecture, Becker asked his audience to write sentences describing his walk to the podium. "Some of your sentences," commented Becker, "sounded like the beginning of poems, or novels, or short phorisms, or metacomments, or newspaper stories or police reports." There were many different kinds of language genres—many kinds of symbolic worlds—presented, and, thus, "the interaction between you [points to an audience member] and me was different from that between you and me." So too the children in Genevive's class were having different interactions—different conversations—not only with her, but with each other.

The book stimulating the children's stories, Keats's *Whistle for Willie* (1964), is described by Rudine Sims Bishop (Sims, 1982) as a "melting pot book" (p. 47); although the book's illustrations reveal that Peter is African American, Peter could be of any sociocultural background. He is an "Any Child" (Sims, p. 41). And yet, as Bakhtin (1981) explained, and Sims Bishop makes clear, stories contain within them the threads of other stories, other texts. Thus, Keats's story about a little boy and his desire to whistle for his dog is intertwined with other, implicit stories about young children's ways of living, talking, and relating to other people.

In the end, suggests Sims Bishop, the Any Child is not culturally neutral but inextricably bound to dominant societal stories about young children's ways of being with others. One can imagine Mollie and her dog, enacting a going-to-bed ritual, in an Any Child text. But what about Jameel's tough-talking, cartoon-like dog, designed to elicit loud guffaws, not kindly smiles? It would not belong. To make his characters fit in, Jameel would need to write a story, as Lamar did, about a "regular dog" who did regular things, a kind of "Any Dog" perhaps.

There are, I believe, pedagogical texts that contain within them generic images of child learners and their ways of talking and of relating to teachers and peers. Like melting pot books, these stories of teaching and learning make invisible the sociocultural diversity of our children. Moreover, such stories also make invisible the sociocultural consequences of teaching, the ways in which instructional decisions may constrain or deny children's language, children's experiences, indeed, children's intelligence (Burbles & Rice, 1991; Erickson, 1987; Fine, 1987; Greene, 1988; Hymes, 1972).

To challenge and extend our images of learning children and helpful teachers, we as literacy educators and researchers must do more than critically examine instructional approaches few would regard as ideal (e.g., literacy programs for young children that consist of copying exercises and phonics worksheets). Rather, we must turn our attention to those approaches widely assumed to be the best we have to offer our young. One such approach is process pedagogy.

Process pedagogy is a language arts approach that grew out of the research and pedagogical interest in *the* writing process during the seventies and eighties (Dyson & Freedman, 1991). A critically important movement, it was and is a response to product-centered teaching. Theoretically, the pedagogy seems rooted primarily in discussions of what *real* or *expert* writers do—the processes they engage in as they write. Writers plan, revise, and, perhaps most importantly, seek out responses to their work from those who care about their texts and, especially, about their messages.

The resulting pedagogical images have featured individual children, bent over sheets of paper, giving *voice* to experiences. Other important images have been children presenting *drafts* to teacher or peer *audiences* during *conferences*, and audiences responding with appreciation and, often, with questions about *sense*—about unclear or missing information. Personal narratives are often featured in these images, because children writing such narratives should have adequate information for drafting, for responding to others' questions about their texts, and, ultimately, for revising. The choreographed interplay is between individual child as writer and the responsive other, who move to a pedagogical rhythm designed for an every child.

Indeed, while the initial development of the pedagogy occurred in relatively homogeneous settings (e.g., Graves, 1983), young writers from diverse backgrounds have populated the pedagogical literature, all planning, responding, and revising. The literature has dealt only peripherally with issues of social and cultural diversity. And yet, in Rose's (1989) words,

> Each member of a teacher's class, poor or advantaged, gives rise to endless decisions, day to day determinations about a child's reading and writing: decisions about how to tap strengths, plumb confusions, foster growth. The richer your conception of learning and your understanding of its social and psychological dimensions, the more insightful and effective your judgments will be. (p. 236)

In this essay, I aim to articulate some of the social dimensions of composing and, thereby, to contribute to an enriched vision of children's literacy learning. More specifically, I aim to allow young children's composing processes sociocultural depth and breadth by setting them clearly within the complex worlds of urban schools and, in the process, to highlight children's sociocultural intelligence. I argue that composing (i.e., that planning, responding, revising) is a distinctly sociocultural process that involves making decisions, conscious or otherwise, about how one figures into the social world at any one point in time. Variation in the kind of oral and written language genres a child uses, in the kinds of discourse traditions a child draws upon, and in the kind of relationships a child author enacts with others provides striking evidence that these decisions are not neutral, acultural ones, even for young school children. Moreover, this variation reveals as well the sociocultural dimensions of genre, sense, and audience currently unarticulated in the pedagogical literature.

In the following pages, I develop this perspective, drawing on an ethnographic project in Genevive's classroom to illustrate its fundamental precepts. I begin with a brief introduction to Genevive's classroom and the research project. I then use data from that project to illustrate three key theoretical ideas of a sociocultural perspective on composing processes:

1. the social and developmental importance of sharing symbolic worlds;
2. the dialogic relationship between author and social world (i.e., *sociocultural breadth* or how young children vary their texts in different social situations);
3. the "heteroglossia" (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 428) of symbolic worlds (i.e., *sociocultural depth* or how the complexity of a child's social world might be reflected in any one text).

I conclude with a discussion of the implications of this perspective for literacy teaching and learning, hoping to help unmelt the pedagogical pot and, in the process, to contribute to teachers' ability to participate in and further the rich conversations possible in socioculturally diverse classrooms.

GENEVIVE'S CLASSROOM: CULTURAL DIVERSITY AND SELF-EXPRESSION IN ACTION

Genevive's K/1 classroom was in an urban K-3 school in the San Francisco East Bay. The school served children from diverse heritages: 52% came from a low income and working class African-American community and the others from an integrated but primarily European-American working and middle class community; about 27% of the children were Anglo and then there were

small percentages of children from many different ethnic heritages, among them Chinese, Filipino, Mexican, and Native American.

Genevive was an experienced and highly skilled teacher, knowledgeable about recent pedagogical innovations (including process pedagogy) and sensitive to the social issues important to her children. Within her classroom, there were a variety of opportunities for story telling and writing. Especially important for my project were the independent composing period and the opportunities that period presented for social interaction in ways both informal (e.g., quiet talking among children during work periods) and formal (e.g., daily sharing of the morning work during rug time).

The project was undergirded in large part by the work of the language and social philosopher Bakhtin. As will be discussed, Bakhtin gives theoretical attention to individual expression *and* to sociopolitical complexity, particularly to how unique individuals use language to situate themselves in the complex social world. However, Bakhtin was a "philosophical anthropologist" (Clark & Holquist, 1984, p. 3), who grounded his studies in examinations of literary texts. I aimed to ground my study in children's social lives.

Thus, the study was an ethnographic one: I was interested in the contextual specifics of children's discourse use. That is, I wondered how children used varied kinds of language art forms and cultural traditions (e.g., those of their ethnic communities, of popular culture, of shared classroom literature) as they interacted with Genevive and their peers throughout the school day. (For discussions of the ethnography of communication, see Gumperz & Hymes, 1986).

With the assistance of a doctoral student, Paula Crivello, I gathered observational data an average of twice weekly throughout the school year, focusing on four focal children—two kindergartners and two first graders—and each child's circle of friends. I documented the children's use of both oral texts fashioned in informal talk (i.e., their oral composing of jokes, stories, songs) and official written texts. (For details of data collection and analysis, see Dyson, 1992.)

All of the focal children were African-American and from low-income backgrounds (as determined by qualification for the federal school lunch program). I picked children with language resources that reflected the verbal traditions of the African-American community and, also, children with clear, distinctive personalities in the classroom community. Two of the focal children are featured in this essay: Lamar, a kindergartner, and Jameel, a first grader. Their case studies provided particularly vivid illustrations of the key concepts of sociocultural breadth and depth.

I begin this exploration of the sociocultural dimensions of child composing by discussing the developmental roots of the children's participation in the daily sharing of their texts, that is, in the sharing of their symbolic worlds.

THE SHARING OF SYMBOLIC WORLDS: SOCIOCENTRIC IMAGES OF CHILD COMPOSERS

From infancy on, we as human beings are remarkably social beings (Bruner, 1986). Indeed, the young child's developing sense of *self* is characterized by an expanding sense of how to share experiences with others (Stern, 1985). This sharing includes the first offerings of invented symbolic forms (e.g., playful actions, drawings, songs) and early social comments on forms fashioned by others (e.g., "Look at this book, this picture, this show"; see also Bruner, 1990). This desire to share a more intimate, a more particular world with someone else may help explain why, a while back, my brother, who was living in Bermuda and who had not been in touch with my mother for months, called her a half a continent away in rural Wisconsin to say only, "Hey Ma, there's a great movie on the television right now. Turn it on. You'll love it." And why she did.

This concept is the first basic idea, the first step toward reconceptualizing children's composing processes—this notion that an inherent urge of the individual is to be with others through shared symbols that capture some aspect of a communal world. It is fundamental to the whole of our intellectual and emotional lives, as it helps set in play the search for mutuality, for understanding and for being understood.

Young children bring to school their experiences in establishing spheres of relatedness, their ways of sharing the inner life of feelings and ideas with others. That is, children bring to school a repertoire of ways of constructing symbolic worlds, among them, their stories, songs, jokes, and other familiar ways of using language. They have learned these routine ways of using language—these genres—from participating in situations in which people using language adopt certain roles toward each other and toward experience. For example, children come to understand how people tell jokes, to whom, and about what. They may learn, for example, that teasing one's sister by casting her as a character in a scatological joke is more fun than teasing one's mother in a similar way (Dunn, 1988).

Bakhtin (1981, 1986) explored this situated nature of texts, that is, the embeddedness of texts within social relationships. Discussing Bakhtin's perspective, Morson (1986) explains that any patterned way of using language—any kind of text or genre—"temporarily crystallize[s] a network of relations" (p. 89) between themselves and other people; those relations include the author's sense of (a) her or his power and status vis-à-vis the other, (b) the purposes that have brought them together, (c) the topic of their discourse, and (d) the history of other conversations they have had. A particular kind of text, then, is an articulation of a particular kind of social relationship, of one's place in the ongoing social dialogue.

An Illustration of Classroom Communal Sharing

In Genevive's classroom, the children's ways of constructing worlds were displayed publicly during the communal sharing that occurred daily on the rug, an activity eagerly anticipated by the children. "I can't wait to read it," Jameel would say when he finished drawing and writing a story, anticipating with great pleasure the morning sharing time. The children typically listened carefully as each child's drawing and composing was presented, modeling themselves, no doubt, on the careful attention Genevive herself gave each child. Children were visibly upset if time passed too quickly and their efforts had to be saved for the next day. As a group, they became familiar with the distinctive structures, styles, and themes of individual children, and they noted connections among children's texts and between children's and professional texts. In these matters too they seemed to model themselves after Genevive. To illustrate, following is a brief description of a rug-time sharing in early February:

> The children have gathered to share their dictated or independently composed stories. Genevive asks each child if she or he wants to read their story or if Genevive should read it. Anita asks Genevive to read hers, a fantasy story about a Valentine princess. "It's similar to Daisy's, huh?" says Genevive, as Daisy shared a princess story today too. Shawnda now reads her piece about the friends she loves. When she finishes, Jameel comments, "[Hers] is sort of like my book. That's sort of like a love story." (Jameel has just written a "love story.") Now it's Philip's turn. "Get ready," says Genevive, "It's one of Philip's incredible adventures!"

For Genevive's children, the rug-time activity was an opportunity to use many ways of constructing symbolic worlds to engage in both self-expression and social connection. By using certain genres—certain kinds of child-writing—the children positioned themselves in the social life of the class in particular ways; that is, Anita's princess fantasy, Philip's adventure, and Shawnda's love story *crystallized the network of relations* in the class differently. Each child's text was both a response and an anticipation: a shaped response to the symbolic world-sharing that had happened before and an embodied anticipation of the class response to follow.

To elaborate, first grader Shawnda greeted peers in her piece, writing a string of "Hi's " and "How ra [sic] you's"; she, in turn, expected to be included in any "love story" written by a friend. She did not, however, expect such stories from kindergartner Philip, who consistently wrote about disasters of one kind or another. (Indeed, during composing one day, Shawnda explained to Philip, whose drawings were initially scribbles, that controlled scribbling could easily stand for a battle; she showed him a picture book scribble illustration of a dog and cat fighting.) Shawnda herself never drew disasters, although she did draw a princess, as Anita had, and search out the desired compliments (e.g, "Do you like this? Is this pretty?").

Jameel initiated a child-controlled genre that captured the social imagination of the entire class. He drew a fish singing a song, which song

Jameel then sang to the class. Jameel's performance led to much laughter and admiration—not to mention much singing—from his peers. He had introduced a new way of participating in classroom social life. In doing so, he anticipated others' appreciation and involvement. In future rug-time gatherings, other children also sang songs, influenced by Jameel's performance and, more broadly, by other social encounters with songs. Lamar, for example, drew himself singing a song into a microphone and then actually sang to the class. Lamar grinned widely as he took the classroom stage, knowing well the laughter that would soon follow. While his song was not as carefully crafted as Jameel's, it was no less a social act.

The children's texts thus exhibited "addressivity, the [text] quality of turning to someone else" (Bakhtin, 1986, p. 99), who will then respond, continuing the communication link. This emphasis on the social nature of young children's symbolizing, including their writing, differs in fundamental ways from common ways of thinking about young children as composers. Young children are not viewed as turning to others; their texts are not assumed to be links in a Bakhtinian communication chain. Rather, children are viewed as lacking audience awareness; their writing is considered egocentric, a Piagetian term that has been used by many language arts educators to describe young children's writing (e.g., Graves, 1983; Moffett & Wagner, 1983; Temple & Gillet, 1989). If they are to develop as composers, children, whose writing is "egocentric play" (Graves, 1983, p. 164), must learn to anticipate the needs of other people, their audience.

For example, d'Ambrosio (1988), a second grade teacher, describes his efforts to implement process pedagogy and develop his students' sensitivity to audience needs. In his words, he asks the classroom "audience" (i.e., those children listening to their peers' stories) to "tell the writer what they liked about the piece, and also what he or she might do to make it better. In this way the writer could receive feedback ... and by being writing teachers themselves, the children would become more aware of what good writing is" (p. 55).

In this description, very representative of descriptions of process pedagogy, there is clear and reasonable concern for helping young children understand school expectations for writing; there is little concern for children's existent social expectations, nor for variation that might exist in those expectations. Given the inferred location of d'Ambrosio's classroom in a relatively homogeneous community, this lack of concern is not necessarily problematic. However, in a socioculturally diverse classroom, it could well be problematic.

As already discussed, social occasions for sharing symbolic worlds are not new ones in children's lives, having deep developmental and cultural roots. Indeed, in developmental psychology, the concept of egocentrism has undergone much critical rethinking in the last 20 years, in part because the sociability of young children is well recognized (see especially Bruner & Haste, 1986, and Donaldson, 1978). Language arts pedagogy also needs some rethinking. Children's writing is not simply made socially sensitive by the response of others; it is itself a social act, a way of interacting with others.

A pedagogic notion of socializing the egocentric must thus be replaced by one of making varied ways with written language relevant to the sociocentric (Dyson, 1989, 1991). In the next section, I aim to further specify this sociocentric image of child writers. I illustrate that children may have their own expectations for good and sensible stories and for appropriate audience response and that these expectations are situation specific, that is, they depend upon the ongoing social situation.

SOCIOCULTURAL BREADTH: THE DIALOGIC RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN SELF AND SOCIAL WORLD

In responding to the social world at any one moment, the author, child or adult, shapes not only a text, but also a sense of self, of one's place in a complex social world. This dialogic relationship between the self and the social world accounts for the sociocultural breadth of children's texts, the second fundamental idea needed for reconceptualizing children's composing. By *dialogic relationship* is meant that the self and the social world exist simultaneously: there is no sense of self without a social world within which one figures (Bakhtin, 1981).

Bakhtin's concept of the dialogic self is consistent with much recent social thought, which has blurred the boundaries of traditional ways of thinking about the relationship between the individual and the social world and, indeed, about texts themselves. Ethnographers have portrayed the individual as variously positioned among diverse social worlds, crossing borders more often than sitting within some kind of pure culture (Rosaldo, 1989; see also Clifford, 1988; Hymes, 1980). Similarly, literary theorists have blurred the boundaries of a written work, portraying texts themselves as sites of competing social and language values (Foucault, 1977; Mukerji & Schudson, 1991). In my own essay, for example, I use first names and finely detailed vignettes to convey my closeness to the teacher and children observed; but the names are pseudonyms, the vignettes framed with academic terms, suggesting my closeness to the academy.

When children enter school, they too face a complex social world of competing values. The classroom does not present children with an integrated cultural or language world, unless one views that world only from the adult educator's viewpoint. There is, for example, the official school world or social arena, in which children must be students, the peer world, in which they must be co-workers (and perhaps friends), and the world of their sociocultural community, which, for nonmainstream children in Genevive's school, reformed in the classroom; children who shared experiences outside of school were drawn to each other inside the school as well.

To negotiate among these worlds, young children make use of their repertoire of genres, including their stories, songs, jokes, and other familiar ways of using language. These ways of using language reflect the folk traditions of their community, the popular media that pervade their lives,

and the written literature they have experienced at school and/or at home. Because there is sociocultural variation in family and community uses of language, there is also such variation in children's repertoires of genres.

Children's cultural materials—their ways of using language—are valued in different ways in different worlds; that is, the official school world, the peer world, and the community world do not necessarily have the same notions of appropriate themes, structures, and styles (e.g., Cazden, 1988; Heath, 1983; Miller, Potts, & Fung, 1989). As individual children position themselves within diverse social relationships, they will draw in different ways on their cultural resources, that is, on their discourse traditions. Thus, learning to write is not culturally neutral, because it involves figuring out how one's words, and thus how one's self, figure into the social life of school and, indeed, of the world beyond school. When one composes a text, one also composes a social self.

Genevive's daily composing period was particularly interesting, given this complexity. Children were sitting and composing within the official school world. However, as they composed, they sat and talked with their peers. While all peers were classmates, some were neighbors from the same community. At the end of the composing period, each child was given the opportunity to share a written text, at least potentially, with the entire class, although a child could (and sometimes did) use sharing time to connect with selected others.

Lamar and Jameel will illustrate how individual children positioned themselves within different kinds of social relationships and, also, how these different relationships involved (a) different kinds of texts reflecting diverse cultural resources and (b) different kinds of appropriate audience response; that is, they will illustrate the sociocultural intelligence composing oral or written texts demands. Lamar, a kindergartner, was just learning about the rhythm of the daily composing period. First grader Jameel, who had been in Genevive's classroom as a kindergartner, was more familiar with the opportunities the sharing time presented and positioned himself in more deliberate ways.

Lamar: Using Diverse Cultural Materials with Diverse Others

As a kindergartner, Lamar was quiet, attentive, and often quite serious during official literacy activities, including rug-time sharing. But he could be talkative, assertive, and very funny in the unofficial world, particularly in his relationships with his close friends James and Tyler. Most importantly, different kinds or genres of stories flowed from these differing stances or relationships with others, as will be exemplified by the following three narratives. (In this essay, narratives are defined as texts composed of at least two chronologically related statements that refer to a specific, rather than a general, event, real or imagined.)

The first narrative was part of a collaborative reconstruction by Lamar, James, and Tyler of favorite sections of a Batman movie. This sort of joint

storytelling was common among all children in the class, particularly, but not exclusively, boys. Each child would give an oral account of a particularly funny, scary, or otherwise engaging episode in a commonly viewed movie or television show. The children emphasized plot and action; sometimes they simply reported the recalled episode, but, on other occasions, they *performed* it. A performative style of language use is characterized by discourse features that exploit the musical possibilities of language (e.g., rhythm, rhyme, expressive sound effects) and that encourage participative sensemaking (e.g., dialogue, tropes, hyperbole); in contrast, a communicative style is more straightforward, the text relatively unmarked by such discourse features.

The children's purpose in joint storytelling was not communication but social cohesion. That is, they were not communicating information to an unknowing other; while they would occasionally correct each other's factual errors, they mainly enjoyed together a story they had experienced separately, as is illustrated by the following extended conversation:

Lamar Text #1: Collaborative Account

Lamar, James, and Tyler are drawing pictures of a sea shell. Their talk, however, often is not related to that task.

James:	(recognizing a Batman shape in his drawing) I'm Batman. Lamar! Look it. I'm Batman.
... [omitted data]	
Tyler:	Remember when he dropped that bottle? The smoke came out, and then he pressed that button, and the arrow went up?
James:	Uh huh.
Tyler:	And then he—
Lamar:	⌜ Uh uh. That's not Batman.
Tyler:	⌞ And then—
James:	And then Batman went like that (dramatizing action). And that thing hooked on very tight, huh? And then Batman said, "Whatever you do, don't let go," huh?
Lamar:	I'm talking about the part the part the part when he came down and he *showed* the Joker.
James:	Yeah.
Tyler:	I like that part where he killed the Joker—he's hecka mean.
Lamar:	I know. He's hecka mean.

"Remember when?" asks Tyler. "Huh?" says James, meaning "Isn't that right?" And, after an initial objection, "I know," responds Lamar. These affirmations and negotiated recollections of a common experience—in common (Willis, 1990) or popular culture—were heard often in unofficial talk. While in this case the talk was among Lamar and close friends from his own community, Lamar carried on similar conversations with many children in the room.

However, later, in this same conversation, another kind of narrative evolved in which Lamar made use of another kind of cultural material. The story's theme, both religious and humorous, its dramatic and performative

style, and its repetitive, circular structure suggested a story from Lamar's cultural tradition (Smitherman, 1986). Lamar's purpose was not to recall a shared experience, but to call attention to his true experience through humorous exaggeration. Lamar wanted his audience to attend and to laugh, to participate with him in *his* story. In the following transcript excerpt, the boys are having a collaborative discussion, and then Lamar takes the floor for an individual performance:

Lamar Text #2: A Performed Story

James: Lamar, do you listen to your parents? Lamar, do you listen to your parents?
Lamar: Yes.
Tyler: [I listen to my parents.
[I listen to my parents.
James: Well you gonna live very long. 'Cause God said if you listen to your parents you get to live very long.
Lamar: No you don't.
James: Yes you do.
Lamar: Only kids have a long—a real long time to live. Like you do.
Tyler: Yea. Kids really do.
Lamar: And Tyler does.
James: But grown ups don't. Grown ups die, huh?
...
Lamar: But James, when God comes back to this world, all of us gonna be alive again. For real.
James: But first we gotta die, huh?
Lamar: Yeah. And then when God comes back we're alive again.
James: When God's son comes back—when God's son comes back we can live for a long time.
...
Lamar: But you can't see God.
Tyler: You can't see him. I know.
Lamar: He's in the clouds.
Tyler: Yep.
Lamar: *And once I went up to heaven, when I was sleeping. For real.*
Tyler: One time I went up to heaven—
Lamar: *And then—And then I open my eyes and then I was back at home and then I fell right back down on my bed (laughs)*
Tyler: One time—
Lamar: *'cause I thought I was flying.*
Tyler: One time—
Lamar: *(dramatizes falling down flapping arms)*
Tyler: [One time—
Lamar: [*I thought I could fly*!
Tyler: One time I was sleeping in my dreams.
...
I flew up to heaven. I flew up to heaven.
Lamar: [I didn't fly up to heaven. When I was sleeping I *went* up to heaven. (responding to Tyler)
Tyler: [And when—And—wait Lamar. Wait Lamar.

And when I came back from heaven I fell and bumped my head on my brother's poster. I mean I fell and bumped my head on a needle.

Lamar: *I thought I was flying. So I went like this (very high voice) "I can fly. Ain't this funny? oooooooo" (dramatizes crashing after flapping his arms)* (Boys laugh.) (Lamar's story is underlined for ease of reading.)

Lamar was a better (more artistically performative) storyteller than Tyler, who tended to imitate other children's stories. Indeed, Tyler had trouble getting the floor from Lamar, who continued to tell his story until he elicited laughter. (Later, in the same conversation, Tyler had more success with a story that struck Lamar as funny).

Lamar's last illustrative narrative was dictated to an adult after the children had taken a trip to the symphony and heard the story and listened to the music of *Peter and the Wolf*. Lamar's dictated story has many features of mainstream written narrative, for example, the third person voice, the adverbs, the reported speech (Purcell-Gates, 1988; Tannen, 1982), and, structurally, it is more linear than Lamar's "going-up-to-heaven" story:

Lamar Text #3: A Dictated Story

One day Peter was lonely. And he heard something flapping. And he looked up in the tree and saw a bird. And suddenly the bird fell down. And he looked down at the bird and he said, "How am I going to put him back into his nest?" Peter saw the duck and he had a pond. So the duck swam in the pond.

Lamar's *Peter and the Wolf* narrative was produced with help from a teacher/scribe. Such dictation activities revolved around questions like "And then what happened?" Thus, the emphasis was relatively more on information, less on performance.

As Lamar illustrated, oral or written texts emerge from a distinctly sociocultural process. Certain kinds of sense—certain kinds of narratives—only evolved given certain kinds of responsive relationships with other people. And, indeed, the criteria for "good" writing, even within what might be considered a single genre, like narrative, varied as did appropriate responses of the audience. Lamar thus used his cultural resources to position himself in different ways in the complex worlds of the classroom. To entice and capture his friends' attention, Lamar told a very different story than the one he told the teacher scribe. Different still were the collaborative recounts of popular media stories, where neither information nor performance mattered as much as skillfully selecting an episode that would elicit an "Oh yeah!" or an "I know," from peers. While Lamar presented particularly striking differences, summarized in Table 1, sociocultural breadth—variation in ways of making social use of story worlds—was pervasive in all case study children's data.

Table 1
An Illustration of Sociocultural Breadth

Sample Text	Dominant Purpose	Text Sense	Addressee Role	Sample Addressee Response
Batman account	Social cohesion	Shared	Involved collaborators	"Oh yeah!" "I know"
Heaven story	Entertaining performance	Humorous/ Artful	Appreciative audience	"That's funny!"
Peter story	Academic performance	Explicit/ Informative	Coach/ Teacher	"Very good"

Note. This chart is not intended to be comprehensive. It is intended only to illustrate that words like audience and sense do not have generic meaning.

Jameel: A Performative Stance during Classroom Composing Times

First grader Jameel provides another striking example of the social dialogue between self and others. Jameel was a lover of language, including jokes, cartoons, and children's literature, especially literature with rhythmic and rhyming language (for a complete case study of Jameel, see Dyson, 1992). He told and wrote jokes, chants, and stories; while he controlled many styles of discourse, during composing time he was a language performer.

A genre he named "a love story" illustrates his social role. Certainly many young children write texts in which they express their affection toward others (the ubiquitous lists of "I love [name]"). But Jameel's use of the genre was distinctive, as is illustrated when Jameel's love story is compared to that of his peer Brett. Brett, who was European American, and Jameel sat side by side as they composed these stories, and Brett seemed inspired by Jameel. But each boy used the love story to position himself differently in the classroom social arenas; each was working for a different response.

Jameel Text #1: A Performed Love Story

(Page 1) Do you love you?
All about love [title]
(Page 2) I love me. Do you love you? (picture of two persons going toward a heart)
The end
(Page 3) I do I do I do I do I do I do I do I do
So do I.
The end.
(Page 4) Into love (picture of a person squeezed between two hearts)
The end
(Page 5) Brett do you love Angie?
Yes
Now do you love him?

(Page 6) You like Monique, Edwards? (There were two Edwards in Jameel's classroom—and one Monique.)
(Page 7) Shawnda and Jules.

[Note: I have separated Jameel's text into its dialogic parts and conventionalized both boys' spelling, in order to more clearly reveal their nature.]

Brett Text #1: A Private Love Story

(Page 1) Do you like yourself? [title]
(Page 2) Do you like yourself or not? Oh well I like you and I do like me.
(Page 3) Now do you like me? Cause I like you and I love you. I love you I love you I love you more than all of the seeds in
(Page 4) the whole world. (Children had been studying seeds. Picture of Angie [shaped like an A] and another of Brett [also shaped like an A] proclaiming "I love you.")

Brett's love story was a personal expression of his affection for his best friend, Angie. Although he spoke to her in his piece, there is no indication that she spoke back. The *I* in his piece was always Brett; the *you* was Angie. Perhaps since Brett and Angie regularly shared their work with each other, there was no need to fictionalize a written response.

Jameel, on the other hand, did not use his love story to engage in a social dialogue with any one child. He began with an imagined conversation between two people, who alternately claimed the speaking *I*, a strategy he often used (e.g., "I do ... So do I.") Then Jameel stage-managed the conversation between paired classmates; the addressed *you*'s in his piece shifted from one child to another. His text, written in a more performative style, was clearly addressed to the public of his peers, and, unlike Brett, he was very anxious to share his story with the class and to enjoy the inevitable giggles and groans.

Lamar, Jameel, and Brett reveal the sociocultural breadth present amidst the talking and writing that occurs during the classroom composing time. While not necessarily consciously made, their genre choices (their choices of theme, style, and organizational structure) and the social relationships implicit in those choices illustrate children's emergent ability to situate themselves, to claim a social place for themselves as complex individuals, within the social arenas of the classroom. Moreover, their talking and writing sets up a useful theoretical tension between visions of good texts and audience response as generic parts of a process pedagogy designed for egocentric children and visions of good texts and response as *situated* or deeply contextualized aspects of the composing processes of sociocentric children—children who must gain control of and expand their sense of response and text, but not children who, in any simplistic sense, must be made audience sensitive.

SOCIOCULTURAL DEPTH: MAKING OTHERS' WORDS ONE'S OWN

In preceding sections, I have discussed the basic human urge to share symbolic worlds with others, and I have stressed that the nature of any such shared world—in this essay, a language product or text—is an articulation of the relationship between author and other at one historical moment; moreover, different discourse traditions may figure into different relationships. While children no doubt come to school with varying commands over diverse discourse traditions and diverse genres, they all bring experience forming language products (themes, styles, structures) that will allow satisfying relationships with others.

The view of language use presented to this point, however, does not yet suggest the theoretical depth of Bakhtin, nor the social depth of the children's composing. To introduce the missing complexity, I turn once again to the love stories. To compose his love story, Brett used words that initially had been in Jameel's ("Do you love you?"). To bring those words into his relationship with Angie, Brett recast them in his own conversational language ("Do you like yourself or not?"). This phenomenon of taking others' words and infusing them with one's own intentions is basic to language use. As Bakhtin (1981) explains,

> As a living, socio-ideological concrete thing, as heteroglot opinion, language, for the individual consciousness, lies on the borderline between oneself and the other. The word in language is half someone else's. It becomes "one's own" only when the speaker populates it with his own intention, his own accent, when he appropriates the word, adapting it to his own semantic and expressive intention. Prior to this moment of appropriation, the word does not exist in a neutral and impersonal language (it is not, after all, out of a dictionary that the speaker gets his words!), but rather it exists in other people's mouths, in other people's contexts, serving other people's intentions: it is from there that one must take the word and make it one's own. (pp. 293-294)

Language is a "living, socio-ideological thing" precisely because it does not come from dictionaries but from people in particular situations; words "taste" of those situations and of the vision of social reality (of power relationships)—the ideology—implicit in those situations. To again quote Bakhtin:

> For any individual consciousness living in it, ... all words have the "taste" of a profession, a genre, a party, particular work, a particular person, a generation, an age group, the day and hour. Each word tastes of the context and contexts in which it has lived its socially charged life; all words and forms are populated by intentions. Contextual overtones ... are inevitable in the word. (1981, p. 293)

The third basic concept about language I wish to stress, then, is the heteroglossia of language: the fact that when a speaker (or writer) uses language in any one situation, contextual overtones—the tracings of many previous uses of that language—surround it, providing sociocultural depth.

Thus, authors must give those words their own accent, infuse them in some way with their own intention.

Of course, language users may be oblivious to, naive about, the heteroglossia of language, as Lamar seemed to be. Different ways of using language may co-exist in an apparently automatic way. Bakhtin (1981, p. 296) refers to a peasant who "prayed to God in one language, sang songs in another, spoke to his family in a third and, when he began to dictate petitions to the local authorities through a scribe, he tried speaking yet a fourth." But the peasant changed discourse traditions automatically, without thinking. He did not, for example, try to view everyday life through the language of song.

In order to avoid mindless domination by the surrounding discourses, a language user must be mindful, to some extent, of language variation and how one situates—or chooses not to situate—oneself in the social worlds they suggest. While Jameel was a young child, to at least some extent, he did choose his orientation, who he wanted to be, by taking words that came from one social arena and infusing them with his own intention as he stood some place else. His stories were often rich with contextual overtones, as I illustrate in the following section.

Variations on *Whistle for Willie*

As noted in this essay's opening, Genevive read her children *Whistle for Willie*, the plot of which is summarized below:

> A little boy named Peter is playing outside one day when he sees a boy whistling for his dog. Peter decides that he would like to whistle for his own dog Willie. He hides in a box and tries to whistle when he sees Willie walking down the street. But he cannot manage a whistle, and so Willie walks right by him. Peter heads home. On his way, he picks up a piece of chalk and draws a long line right up to his door. There he puts on his father's hat and tries, unsuccessfully, to whistle. When his mother sees him, he pretends to be his father. Eventually, Peter succeeds in whistling, and Willie runs to him. The book concludes with Peter returning home from a trip to the grocery store for his mother; he is whistling, and Willie is trotting along right behind him.

Jameel enjoyed the book greatly. Peter's "good trick," in Jameel's words, of pretending to be the father and the presence of the dog Willie struck thematic chords with Jameel. Later, back at his seat, he told me a story about his own dog, now lost to him:

Jameel Text #2: A Private Performance

Jameel: I don't want to tell anybody [peers] about my dog because it got ran over. His name was Coco. [Dyson: That's a nice name.] Some people call it Coco Pops. **And every time I saw it he go walk walk and walk until I whistle.** [Dyson: He was what?] He can walk and walk—He walked all DAY! **And when I draw with a piece of chalk, like that (drawing a wavy line with his pencil), and this was my house (drawing a house)**—anything like that—he (unclear) home, and then he will come racing and just lick up all the chalk, just like that (following along with his

finger on the line) until he see the house, and he go, "Patooey." And when he eat his dog food he go, (makes a disgusted face) "My taste buds are yeck!" [Dyson: Your dog said, "My taste buds are yuck"? (amused but incredulous)] (laughs) Uh huh. Cause he licked up the chalk and the chalk stayed on his tongue. So we had to put water in his mouth. Then we have to punch his tummy like POW! Like that, until it pops out. And at the end [of his meal], he will always say (making sad expression). His eyes go like that when he want some. He never hardly drink water. He only drinks milk. It wasn't a girl. It was a boy. He got ran over two times. The first time his leg broke off. They have to put another leg on him. And the second time his leg broke—the other leg broke off. And he died. That's why, I don't wanna tell nobody, about, my, dog. (with definiteness) (Sections in bold are related in a literal, thematic way to *Whistle for Willie.*)

Jameel's story, which he labeled a "true" story, was about his dog Coco Pops, but it contained clear intertextual links to *Whistle for Willie.* Coco Pops, like Willie, would walk around the neighborhood, and Jameel, like Peter, would whistle for his dog. Also like Peter, Jameel drew lines with chalk right up to his house door, but, in Jameel's story, Coco Pops would lick up that chalk, which led to a very bad taste in his mouth.

In telling this story, Jameel wove his own experiences into the classroom dialogue about dogs and stories. His own story was in a performative style, in his own accent as it were. Like Lamar's going-up-to-heaven story, Jameel's Coco Pops tale was filled with dialogue and exaggerated action (a dog whose expressions spoke). But the funny episode about Coco Pops and the chalk eating was only part of a larger story in which Coco Pops was run over on two separate occasions and died.

Jameel's story was performed for me, a rather passive observer but a very good audience: I was unfailingly attentive, I laughed, and I made lots of back channel comments. Still, I wasn't "anybody." Jameel did not compose sad stories for the "somebodies" in the official school sphere. Jameel, in fact, rarely wrote about personal experiences. He preferred to perform funny stories on the classroom stage. His decision not to compose a story for the whole class about Coco Pops was deliberate, a part of his sociocultural writing process. In his words, "I wanted to make [my story] funny."

Jameel's funny story for the class was about a cartoon-like dog, similar to many characters in Jameel's "cartoon stories," as he called them, stories whose lead characters did ludicrous things. Jameel's featured dog lived in a town of rich dogs. One day, he was taken to jail—the dog's equivalent of the dog pound:

Jameel Text #3: A Public Performance

One day there was a rich dogs locked up. One day they said "Hey. I got some money. I **can buy something from the grocery store."** And so he bought himself. [spelling and punctuation corrected for ease of reading; bold section related in thematic way to *Whistle for Willie*]

The rich dog is no little puppy sent to the grocery store in a world of daddies, houses, and money for errands (none of which Jameel, who was homeless, had). For this rich dog, the jail was just a grocery store, and he himself was the commodity. "Locked up in jail, he said: "'I can buy *something from the grocery store.*' And so he bought *himself.*" When the rich dog bought himself, he became "his own master" and shouted, "'I'm free!'" as Jameel later explained. Jameel often used such metaphorical language play, a kind of play Smitherman (1986, p. 121), in her discussion of Black verbal art, describes as "metaphorical-imagistic ... [with] images rooted in the everyday, real world."

Willie, Coco Pops, and the rich dog were all part of Jameel's experience with discourse about dogs. That is, between his desire to tell a story and the topic of dogs were the dialogic threads of past stories about dogs, some from home, some from the popular media, some from school. Both Coco Pops and the rich dog had intertextual links to *Whistle for Willie*, and both made use of the performance conventions of his sociocultural community, but each was shaped within a different social relationship: one to amuse and confide in a quiet, responsive adult friend (who perked up whenever Jameel told stories), the other to entertain, to take control of the classroom crowd with a funny story about a tough dog.

Jameel's story was thus composed at the intersection of two kinds of relationships: a horizontal relationship between himself and specific individuals and a vertical relationship between his own psyche (his "inner subjective signs" or meanings for words) and the meanings available in the social world (the outer, "ideological signs" or words) (Volosinov/Bakhtin, 1973, p. 39; see also Emerson, 1986). Jameel turned toward particular others—he positioned himself in certain kinds of horizontal relationships. As he stood and faced that other, he shaped his own text in anticipation of the desired response. However, he had to create that text by working with the landscape of voices that were revealed as he turned toward that other, the already spoken utterances that comprised his working material. His inner voice could only sound by making use of social signs, used words—this is the vertical relationship between inner and outer worlds that accounts for depth. (See Figure 1.)

As he turned toward me, he did so as my focal child, the center of my attention and interest. He built his story of Coco Pops in part on the textual space offered by our shared experience of Keats's book. When he turned toward his classmates, he did so as a peer who wanted very much to be the center of *their* attention on the classroom stage, to be a funny performer. He built his story on the textual space that he saw as he turned toward them, which included the common child culture of cartoons.

So, while Lamar introduced the sociocultural breadth children may have, Jameel revealed the contextual overtones, the sociocultural depth of a young child's efforts to find imaginative space in the social and language life of school, to quite literally write his diverse experiences into the classroom

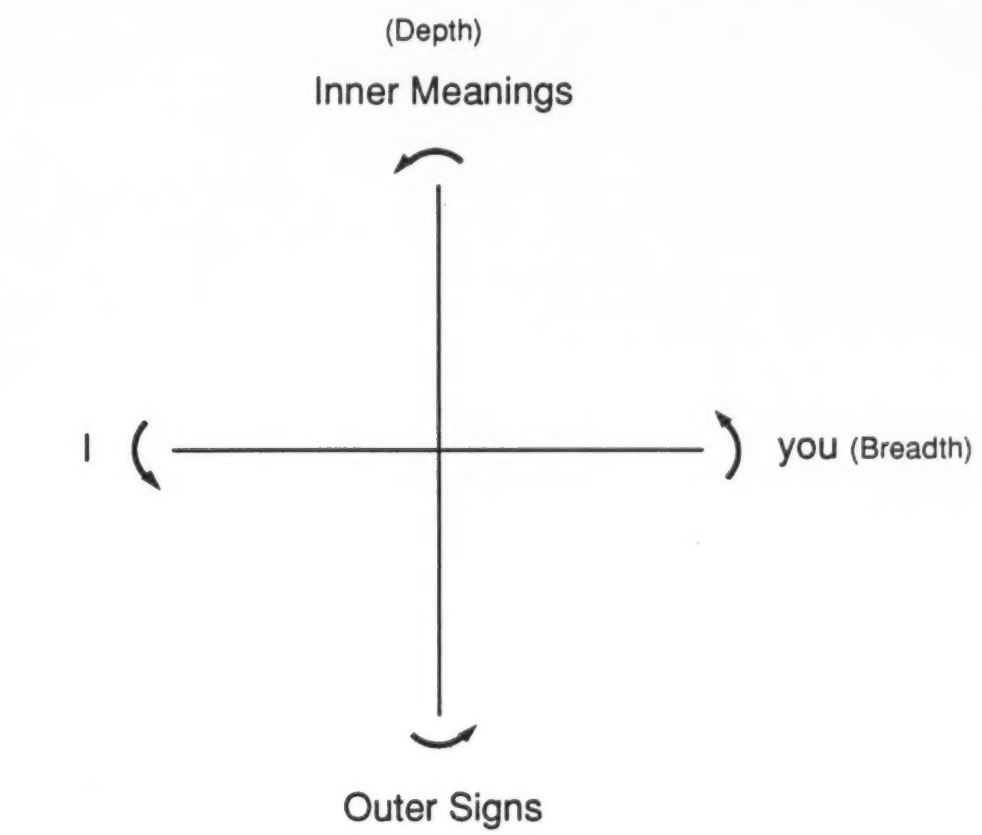

Figure 1. Composing as a sociocultural process: Its horizontal and vertical dimensions (i.e., breadth and depth).

worlds by drawing on all of his cultural resources. Jameel's efforts made concrete Bakhtin's vision of the heteroglossia of texts, their openness to varied readings. Jameel transformed Willie into an intertextual universe of real-life puppies who die, and cartoon-dogs who triumph and in so doing, his own text united the potentially oppositional worlds of home and school, the popular media and school literature. The motivation for his construction was the desire to write himself into the classroom, to belong there.

Such complex language products, rich with contextual overtones to different social arenas (the official school world, the peer world, the home world), were common in Jameel's oral and written texts when he was offered a social stage. For example, after listening to many teacher-read books about

space and participating in whole class discussions of space topics, Jameel wrote a space song about gravity to perform for his appreciative classmates, who regarded him as a superb songwriter. Jameel quite literally viewed the language of science through the language of song:

Jameel Text #4: A Performed Song

I love rockets
and ships, too.
I love space.
Do you, too?
I love space
because it's fun.
I love space cause you bounce around.
It's just like in Chuck E. Cheese.
I just love, to, bounce around,
Bah bah bah bah bah bah bounce around. [transcribed]

To further illustrate, Jameel dramatized a TV quiz game with me during recess. He would ask me a question about space and then, after waiting a few seconds, make a buzzer-like sound as he said "Wrong." At one point, he moved from game master to skillful teacher, delivering an exposition on the moon's movement. That exposition included as well an artful metaphor, a part of Jameel's folk tradition, and thus this text too united home and school, official and popular culture:

Jameel Text #5: An Exposition for a "Student"

Jameel has just asked me why the moon moves back and forth in the sky?

Dyson: You know, I don't know.
Jameel: Because it follows the earth.

Jameel tells me to walk around in a circle, as if I were the earth. He will be the moon.

Jameel: Now walk around like this. You suppose to keep on walking and I'm supposed to go *around* you. I'm the moon.
Dyson: Right. I get it.
Jameel: See that's the only reason that it [the moon] goes around the sun. That's the only reason why it goes around the sun. Cause it follows the earth. [Dyson: I get it.] **It's like they married and they just walkin' around the sun.** (Note Jameel's use of metaphor, in bold.)

Finally, Jameel played on his own love of space in a language play specifically designed to tease and render speechless his peer Edward G. and to amuse his friend Eugenie:

Jameel Text #6: A Tease for a Peer

Edward G. says he is writing a story about space.

Eugenie: And Edward G. loves space.
Jameel: You know what, you know who he gonna marry?
Eugenie: Who?
Jameel: One of the planets. (Eugenie chuckles.)

Stories, songs, games, expositions, and language teases—all were articulations of Jameel's complex relationships with others.

RETHINKING LITERACY RESEARCH AND PEDAGOGY

> Language is for living with. Children's language emerges from the lives they lead and we cannot hope to make sense of it without understanding their lives. A considerable portion of their day is lived in school and this life too becomes woven into their language ... For it is the particular kind of shared life created by all those who work together in a school which determines how language will be used by teachers and pupils. It is the voice of this shared life which marks out the boundaries of possible discourse ... (Rosen & Rosen, 1973, p. 1)

What does the sociocultural breadth and depth of children's shared lives—and the texts those shared lives revolve around—reveal about the assumed sociocultural neutrality of official composing opportunities recommended for schools? How able are those opportunities to accommodate and support children's breadth and depth? What kinds of social dialogues (texts and responses) are allowed? What kinds of intertextual universes are acknowledged?

Certainly visions of children's composing processes in our pedagogical literature are a far sight more powerful than images of children filling in blanks or composing sentences for spelling words. But they have tended to give rise to uniform pictures of child writing, rooted in studies of adult writers in homogenous worlds. Classroom observations suggest that these uniform pictures have given rise to equally uniform classrooms in which child writers draft and respond in a sequence of lock-step activities (Applebee, 1984; Gutierrez, 1992).

While process advocates themselves are distressed by such rigid practices, those practices may be an inevitable development of the theoretical and instructional isolation of process from its intimate connections with child products and contexts. As Lamar and Jameel illustrated, composing a product is a way of engaging in a particular kind of social dialogue with particular others. By presenting images of sociocentric children engaged in a range of dialogic relationships with others, a vision guided by the theoretical insights of Bakhtin, I have aimed to widen "the boundaries of possible discourse" in school language arts programs.

Supporting Sociocultural Breadth

To begin, Lamar and Jameel infused the concepts of audience, response, and sense with sociocultural breadth. Audiences do not simply *respond*. They

laugh, join in, sing along, take offense, and so on, depending upon their relationship to the teller and the tale (the text). If our classroom public spaces are going to allow all the children to belong—to have public visibility and respect—and if we are going to tap all of children's language powers, we need to consider more carefully the rights and obligations of audiences, helpers, and collaborators, and the nature of sense, from the children's points of view.

To elaborate, within the pedagogical literature, audience, response, and sense are generic concepts, used without any particular situational or discourse context (for related critiques, see Gilbert, 1989). Indeed, even theoretical accounts of the interaction between child composers and responsive others have been neutralized, presented devoid of any cultural or contextual meaning.

Guided by the theoretical construct of scaffolding (Bruner, 1975), educators have presented teacher and peer response as a kind of interactive support for the child writer: by asking questions, the audience helps the child writer reflect on and develop their texts and, eventually, internalize more sophisticated decision-making (e.g., Sowers, 1985). There is little concern for the child's willingness to be scaffolded by particular others in the context of particular activities, a criticism voiced by Goodnow (1990) about the scaffolding concept itself. Moreover, the original scaffolding studies focused on how parents guided children's participation in goal-driven, culturally-sensible activities (for a review, see Wertsch, 1985). There is no support in these studies for a generic scaffolding to be enacted by "any" adult and "any" child in "any" activity, culturally sensible or not.

For instance, Jameel resisted the assumption, implicit in current writing pedagogy (e.g., Calkins, 1986; Graves, 1983), that one's audience can also be one's explicit helper. He often felt that peer and teacher conferences violated his rights as author/performer (for a full discussion of this point, see Dyson, 1992). He would take help from a teacher or a peer when he needed help—but not when he perceived that teacher or that peer as a member of the *audience* for his performances.

Concern about the degree to which writing pedagogy offers students particular kinds of help has been voiced (e.g., Delpit, 1988; Reyes, 1991); but there have been few attempts to contextualize such arguments, to ask about how varied roles—explicit helper, collaborator, audience, coach—might be viewed from the point of view of children themselves and in the context of diverse activities. As Gutierrez (1992) also argues, the specifics of instructional contexts have been insufficiently articulated. Providing teachers, and thereby students, with a richer language for discussing writing activities—making distinctions between helpers, audience, collaborators, for example—might allow teachers new ways of observing children's participation in writing activities and new ways of planning writing activities with children.

Not only do the concepts of audience and response need careful situating in a sociocultural context, so too does the notion of sense. Children must learn to make their writing sensible for others—but sense is not defined in the same way for all genres. Discussions of teacher or peer conferences which

offer simple, unproblematized scripts for those conferences (i.e., responder tells author if text makes sense) exacerbate the problem, because they do not sensitize teachers or children to the diversity of ways of making sense, nor to the richness of the language used in our society.

For example, Jameel's sense was not always understood. While Genevive unfailingly laughed and enjoyed Jameel's funny texts during the beginning of the year, as she attempted to implement process pedagogy she became more focused on literal sense. In conferring with Jameel about his rich dog story, for instance, Genevive explained that she was confused as to who was talking, since it wasn't clear if he was talking about many rich dogs or just one. She did not comment on Jameel's humor, use of metaphor, or transformation of the Keats book. (As a relatively relaxed observer—since Genevive, not I, had responsibility for 27 children—I did not appreciate these aspects of his text either until I was home in the peace of my living room.) Process pedagogy as currently articulated does little to encourage teachers of young children or children themselves to appreciate nonliteral sense, including metaphor. And yet, the stylistic features associated with oral performance can add power to academic as well as literary writing, as suggested by Redd's (1992) recent study of the writing of African American college students for African American audiences.

Greater attention to the kinds of genres children construct, and the diverse cultural traditions that inform their efforts, might support greater diversity in the kinds of help teachers provide (e.g., the kinds of texts provided as models, the kinds of guiding questions asked, the kinds of social arrangements made for response). It makes little sense, for example, to encourage children to make their texts more explicit for their audience if they are producing accounts of *shared* experiences for the purpose of social cohesion. Moreover, we must also take responsibility for creating occasions for guided writing beyond open-ended composing periods, when diverse purposes and audiences can be socially negotiated and made socially sensible for and with children (e.g., within science and social studies units requiring diverse kinds of writing; for examples of teacher/researcher collaborations to develop social situations for diverse genres with children, see Heath & Mangiola, 1991, and Moll & Greenberg, 1990).

Acknowledging Sociocultural Depth

Attention to diverse contexts for writing, sensitivity to breadth, is not sufficient for infusing writing process curricula, and, more broadly, literacy curricula, with sociocultural richness. Lamar's stories, for example, revealed sociocultural intelligence—his ability to use stories to belong in different worlds—but they also revealed how compartmentalized his worlds were. Many educational anthropologists have argued that it is precisely such rigidly compartmentalized worlds that set up difficult choices for some children between home, peer, and school worlds (e.g., Fine, 1987; Jacob & Jordan, 1987; Labov, 1987; Ogbu, 1985).

It was Jameel who introduced the notion of sociocultural depth, which arises from the complex intertwining of texts. The self articulates an inner vision through public texts, infusing personal intention into words borrowed from others. It is in fact this concept of depth that makes Bakhtin so appealing to me and, I suspect, potentially appealing to many early childhood educators, who have long valued the distinctiveness of the individual child.

Bakhtin does *not* locate meaning in a complex of social discursive practices, as do many inspired by postmodern views of texts (e.g., Kress, 1989, Lemke, 1989). Such a view seems to eliminate from curricular consideration a concern for the cultural resources and social intentions of the individual child; educators argue for empowering children by teaching them particular ways with words—but they often ignore (or are ignorant of) the resources children bring, the struggles they may face in making use of others' words (Ferdman, 1990). Such a view is, I believe, inevitably disempowering. Rather, for Bakhtin, meaning is in-between—in-between the self and the other, in-between the inner and the outer world.

This in-betweenness suggests that teachers view—and help children view—their texts amidst the sociocultural worlds they are negotiating. The very diversity of children's social agendas and textual worlds offers us as educators an invaluable teaching resource. A fine example of weaving is found in Genevive's efforts during classroom sharing times. In those public spaces, she not only allowed each child appreciation—public visibility and respect—she listened for connections among children, connections of theme, of style, and of structure.

Genevive did this, in part, by providing all children's texts with the dignity of a name (e.g., true stories, descriptions, plays, songs, games, poems, jokes), and she worked to establish connections between their efforts and that of the wider world of discourse: "That sounds like a Shel Silverstein poem ... Your story has a pattern, just like *The Cat in the Hat*, doesn't it?" Thus, her children too, including Jameel, began to name their own work (e.g., "love stories," "cartoon stories") and to find these connections. Such talk seems critical to the growth of reflection and to the gradual expansion of discourse power (Vygotsky, 1962).

Moreover, Genevive responded to her children's diversity by incorporating into her own official repertoire the richness of our intertwined folk, popular, and literary heritages. In Genevive's repertoire were Pete Seeger's (1986) rhythmic *Abiyoyo*, Shel Silverstein's (1974) humorous *Where the Sidewalk Ends*, Dr. Seuss's (1957) cartoon-like *The Cat in the Hat*, Eloise Greenfield's (1986) warm *Honey I Love*, and the traditional folk sense of Wanda Gag's (1977) *Millions of Cats*. The enacted curriculum in Genevive's classroom was child-permeable—allowing space for a diversity of texts, of kinds of sense, of dialogic responses—and thus sensitive to sociocultural diversity.

CODA: THE SOCIAL WORK OF TEACHING

The 1st graders have read a story in which a robot responds automatically to the words "more lunch" by literally making more lunch. Thus, when the book's characters, Duck and Bear, who were very full, said "No *more lunch*," they got more lunch. The children now make their own cardboard robots and then write robot stories. Daisy and Jameel are working side-by-side. Daisy writes a personal essay:

> I know what I am going to do when I bring him home with me I can imagine it now I hope my sister does not wreck my robot. [spelling corrected]

Jameel tries to capture the essential humor of the story in his product about another seemingly helpful robot that mindlessly carries out perceived orders. Laughing as he works, he draws a robot standing guard with a cork gun in front of his house. The robot is supposed to keep "enemies" from coming in the house. If tigers were outside the house, the robot wouldn't open up the door—even if the tigers were chasing him! He writes:

> My robot is going to lock out tigers, including me. [spelling corrected]

Genevive comes by the table. She suggests Jameel write more because his phrase "including me" (his punchline) makes "no sense." Jameel resists: "I don't want to," and "it does make sense." Genevive then suggests that Daisy might want to explain what she can imagine. Daisy protests that "it's too much" to add more, and Genevive says that her story *does* make sense as it is. Jameel protests, "It's no fair."

I offer this final anecdote, because I do not want to leave readers with the idea that sensitivity to individuals, to their social agendas, their cultural resources, is somehow easy to do, for it is not and it was not for Genevive. Indeed, while Bakhtinian concepts allowed me to make sense of Genevive's children's ways of composing, they certainly allowed no prescriptions for practice, and I had none to offer Genevive. In thinking about widening the discourse boundaries of school, I learned from Genevive's struggle, from her willingness to rethink when confronted with a child's declaration, "It's no fair."

Genevive had every intention of implementing the writing process curriculum she had learned through school district workshops. But, while Lamar's dictated texts posed no puzzle to her (perhaps because she influenced their nature), Jameel's texts were confusing, his protests exceedingly frustrating.

It was, however, the very nature of the dialogic life Genevive established with her children that set the stage for her productive frustrations and confusions. In Genevive's classroom, children were encouraged to have their say—to ask questions, offer their own opinions, suggest alternative ways of accomplishing classroom activities. Indeed, Genevive and her children talked about "throwing away" the sexist language that appeared in their books (e.g., "mailman," "policeman"), explored people's willingness to break unfair laws (e.g., the civil rights movement), and wrote letters of protest about varied matters.

Thus, Genevive invited the children's respectful assertiveness as individual decision-makers and social actors. But when the children entered her writing program, they brought unanticipated genres and unexpected social goals, all informed by the intersecting and complex traditions of their popular, folk, and literary heritages. Jameel's writing was particularly unanticipated, a discourse surprise.

Genevive could have assumed that Jameel was simply less prepared for so-called literate language and in need of scaffolding into the writing process. But Genevive's willingness to listen, I believe, supported her efforts to reconsider her own curricular preparedness for her diverse children. Thus, Genevive eliminated the sources of greatest resistance—the public advice during rug-time sharing—and she worked with the children to name their efforts ("cartoon stories"), to place their work in the social landscape of discourse. Jameel, for example, was more willing to elaborate his cartoon stories through more detailed pictures (as one would a newspaper cartoon) than to try to explain his humor through additional writing. (Indeed, it would be quite surprising if a 6-year-old could do so, given that subtle verbal humor is typically just beginning at that age [Honig, 1988]).

Teachers, working with children from many different sociocultural and familial backgrounds, are bound to recognize the intelligence—the sense—of some children more easily than others, to potentially be "unfair" in judgments and in actions. Certainly there is a need to talk with parents and other teachers who share individual children's backgrounds (and thereby critical insight into their cultural resources). Beyond this, however, it seems to me that the most critical requirement for a curriculum that is not a melting pot, that allows for the distinctiveness of the individual and of diverse cultural resources, is a teacher who conveys a respect for children and their communities, a respect that is actualized by listening and by actively working to make curricular space for all students.

If we as educators do not work to "widen the boundaries of possible discourse" in school, we risk setting up unnecessary choices between home, peer, and school ways with words. Thus, we must work to explicitly acknowledge sociocultural breadth, that is, to acknowledge the different decisions any one individual makes in his or her ways of writing, as well as in ways of talking, in order to lessen rigid associations children may make between ways of using language and gender, ethnic, and social class identification (Heath, 1983; Labov, 1987). And we must work too to emphasize sociocultural depth, that is, the thematic, stylistic, and structural connections among different ways of using language, including the fluid and dialogic relationships between what is considered folk, popular, and literary discourse (Bakhtin, 1981; Levine, 1988). For example, we can do a better job of explicitly acknowledging the usefulness of playful language, of metaphor, and of narrative imagination across the official curriculum (Daiute, 1989; Redd, 1992; Scott, 1990; Smitherman, 1986).

Research on diversity in young children's language use has emphasized the discourse differences between home and school, between the oral and the

written, the literary and the popular, presenting a kind of layer cake image of language. On the other hand, the pedagogical literature has too often presented children's composing as a process without sociocultural depth and breadth—and thus has blocked from view the sociocultural intelligence of children and perhaps unwittingly put forth a melting pot pedagogy. A sociocultural perspective on children's literacy processes—and a pedagogical emphasis on connecting, on incorporating—might help us weave together texts and, thereby, lives and thus contribute to a common but complex classroom world, a world not of melting pots, nor of layer cakes, but of distinctive voices engaged in conversation.

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